



# CHECKPOINT



The official voice of the American Volkssport Association

*America's premier noncompetitive sports organization*

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[www.ava.org](http://www.ava.org)

November 2016



NEC News



## NEC Meeting Updates & Deadlines

The next NEC meeting will be held January 20-22, 2017 in Bentonville/Rogers, Arkansas. The meeting location will be the Fairfield Inn & Suite-Rogers, located at 4611 Rozell Road, Rogers, AR 72756. Point of contact is: Leah Hendricks/Director of Sales, (479) 936-5901.

## Call to Clubs for Agenda Items [Click here for Agenda Items Form](#)

If clubs would like to place an item on the January 2017 NEC meeting agenda they must complete the Agenda Items Form and send it to their Regional Director prior to the November 21<sup>st</sup> deadline. Note the following deadlines for the January 2017 NEC meeting.

November 21, 2016: Clubs email Agenda Items to Regional Directors

December 1, 2016: Agenda Items and Reports from RDs due to AVA

December 06, 2016: Final list of Agenda items sent to clubs for review and comment to their respective RD.

December 21, 2016: All meeting reports from RD's and Committees due to AVA

[Click here for Officer Report Form](#) [Click here for Committee Report Form](#)

December 30, 2016: Agenda and reports sent out to the NEC

## ***Dennis Michele, AVA President***

Everyone knows Black Friday is America's biggest shopping day. Last year REI Outdoor Store started a movement called "#optoutside." They closed their stores nationwide, paid all their employees for the day and asked everyone to spend it doing something outdoors with family and friends. This year I am asking you to join with our Program Committee's efforts in spreading this message through the AVA nation. This is a perfect opportunity to introduce America's Walking Club to the rest of the United States much as we did for Time to Walk. Our window of opportunity is short, but we can do it.

I am sending a "call to action" for clubs to pick a time on Black Friday (Nov 25) to have a group/guided walk at their favorite YRE. Even the smallest club can meet at an YRE and walk. It's what we do. Once the meeting time is established, email that information to Hector at HQ. He will list all the AVA Black Friday walks on a webpage that can be assessable to all and possibly linked to #optoutside. It will also be posted on all AVA social media. Once the AVA post is started, you can help by liking and "sharing" it with everyone.

Why should we do this? Is it a failure if no new people come?

This will be the first attempt to partner with other organizations as a walking community. If only 50% of clubs participate that is over 100 events listed in one place under AVA, America's Walking Club. If we are to get organizations to take notice of us, we must present AVA as a whole. Think of AVA as the heart. The heart needs all the arteries working in order to keep the body alive. The clubs are the arteries. This is a beginning, a springboard to have clubs join forces. If we all work together these kinds of programs could eventually bring in new walkers. This program can be repeated for National Trails day with the Rails to Trails organization. If only one new walker comes out, that is one more than we had yesterday.

Please see Programs Committee section for complete instructions.

## **NEC Committee Updates**

## ***Northeast Regional Director—Betty Green***

### **Still a nerd, but not the NE-RD**

The moment Mike and I had been anticipating has come true. We sold our house in NY and moved to PA. Chris Mellen was the NE-Deputy Regional Director is now NE-Regional Director until the end of the term, June 30, 2017. Chris is very knowledgeable about the RD responsibilities and will be an asset to the NE Region and the NEC. I thank Chris for assuming these duties. I will continue to assist the NE clubs during this transition.

It has been a privilege to perform the duties of RD and as a member of the NEC for these past 16 months. I have found this to be a very rewarding experience. I especially appreciated working with the staff at AVA-HQ, the NEC and the NE clubs. The level of professionalism is commendable. I am so impressed with the dedication of so many to improving the AVA. I will continue to actively support the mission of the AVA.

I will also continue to collect personal narratives about positive experiences in the AVA. I have not received very many narratives thus far and hope more of you will find time to write a brief note about the benefits of participation in the AVA.

Warmest regards,  
Betty Green  
Former Northeast Regional Director  
American Volkssport Association

[bettyg52@gmail.com](mailto:bettyg52@gmail.com)



Comfort Summer Sunrise YRE Walk  
Photo courtesy of Martin Callahan

## Standards and Evaluations—Suzi Glass, Chair

### AVA Best Practices Membership



Every walker should consider him or herself an ambassador for AVA. While walking Traditional Events, local people often ask “What are you doing?” or “What’s going on?”.

30-second explanations have elicited interest and more questions, descriptions of walks or runs in which they have participated and/or friendly send-offs. Something as simple as:

“This weekend, the local XYZ Walking Club, part of a national organization, is hosting a self-paced 10k walk they designed. We are here (or here from ABC town) to walk the recreation trails, enjoy the (local) celebration, tour your city, etc. with friends from all over just for Fun, Fitness, and Friendship. You can check it out at the national website at [AVA.org](http://AVA.org)”



is all that is needed. Take every opportunity to promote AVA!

### How to use the AVA DBA

By John McClellan, Happy Wanderers, SE Deputy RD

As a first step in the AVA’s strategic plan, our NEC recently approved a new marketing device known as a “Doing Business As” name or, DBA. Since the term “Volksmarching” has always eluded many outsiders, the DBA approved was: *AVA: America’s Walking Club*. And though walking is not our only activity, these sanctions are the overwhelming majority of our events. This DBA has the advantage of stating that directly while also evoking our “club-centric” nature and making that “National.” We are, in effect, all part of “America’s Walking Club.”



Vaca Valley Volks walkers doing a group walk of the Benicia State Recreation Area with the Carquinez Bridge in the background. Photo courtesy of Steve Dmytriw

You should use this DBA in places where you would have placed the full title “American Volkssporting Association” in the past. Always use both parts together – “AVA” and “America’s Walking Club” – either as written on one line, or - with the “*America’s Walking Club*” immediately adjacent to the AVA initials. Remember, the DBA replaces / is legally interchangeable with the full name of our organization.

So now that it’s official – what’s next? How should the AVA and Clubs use this new device? Our national leaders are already moving out to get the new DBA on our national website and social media. They will also be creating some new products for use by clubs that feature our DBA. Look for an “official” .gif file that clubs can download from the webpage, under “Administrative” tab and “Graphics & Logos.” Also in the works is a simple “bumper sticker,” revision of banners, printed materials and AVA membership applications. Some of these changes will take time – so continue check on availability in 2017.

For AVA Leaders, Clubs and all Associates:

1. We should all quote the DBA frequently!! When talking about our sport or representing the AVA in any forum, RDs, State Organization and Club Leaders should say “*We’re America’s Walking Club*” in the first 10 seconds of the conversation!
2. Create new business cards for your leaders and volunteers with “*AVA: America’s Walking Club*” on them. There is a template for formatted business cards on the AVA website.
3. Use the DBA repeatedly on your club's website, Facebook or MeetUp pages or Twitter feeds.
4. Incorporate the DBA into your club's tri-fold(s), posters and handouts. Use the DBA as a tagline on your Event Brochures, right above or below the “sanctioning .gif” and put the DBA right on your club's directions/maps for traditional or year-round events.
5. Once AVA produces a DBA “sticker” – put this on all your club's YRE boxes - right on the outside!! I think it should be our goal to ensure that every one of our 1,800+ YRE start boxes has “*AVA: America’s Walking Club*” on it by the end of 2017!!
6. Look for a way to incorporate the DBA on any new apparel or boutique items, and even on your next A Award if feasible!
7. Finally, use the DBA on all official club communications - in the header or footer bar, and in Press Releases or articles your club sends to local media.

If we want to break out from being a “best kept secret” – now we have one tool with which to do that. What are we waiting for?

*AVA: America’s Walking Club!*



"Annapolis Amblers at Havre de Grace, Maryland on October 15, 2016".



## **Saddle Up for the Texas Trail Roundup!**

Excitement is building for the Texas Trail Roundup, a new annual walk fest being created in San Antonio, TX. We want to add a second International Marching League (IML) event in the United States. Our walking weekend, 24-26 February 2017, will be patterned after the Freedom Fest which is held annually in October in Washington DC. While no IML Credit will be available in 2017, all walks are sanctioned by the AVA. On Friday, we will welcome our walkers with an afternoon walk in beautiful downtown San Antonio, including the River Walk and the Alamo.



On Saturday, our Marathon walkers will start early and spend most of their day walking down the Mission Reach and River Walk trails to visit four of our World Heritage Site Missions. On the way back, they will also walk through the beautiful and historic King William District. We will also offer 20/10/5km walks along that route. That evening we will have a delicious Mexican dinner at Pico De Gallo. \$30 includes dinner, dessert, non-alcoholic drinks, entertainment, and gratuity. The restaurant is only a few blocks from our event hotel, the Holiday Inn San Antonio, on 318 West Caesar Chavez Blvd.

Reservations for the Holiday Inn San Antonio may be made by calling 1-800-972-3480 and asking for the group rate for the **Texas Trail Roundup**. Our special rate is \$128.43 per day, and includes all taxes, fees, and free parking. This wonderful group rate is also available three days before and after the event. The hotel rate is valid until COB January 29, 2017.

Sunday is our final day. Our longest route will take walkers north on the River Walk, through Breckenridge Park, to the beautiful and historic Monte Vita neighborhood. On the way back walkers will enjoy walking through the Trinity University campus. We will have shorter walks available on that route. Each walk costs \$3.00 and all are rated 1A. With the exception of a few stairs, the walks are suitable for wheelchairs and strollers.



After enjoying your walks, consider heading to the annual San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo. The San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo is an all ages event that offers food, shopping and lots of entertainment. Started in 1949, this celebration has horse and livestock shows alongside the rodeo. The entertainment includes live music by top artists and bands, a carnival and food.

You can find out more about our walk fest on our website, [www.texastrailroundup.org](http://www.texastrailroundup.org). We hope to see all of you in February!

**Susan A. Medlin**

Southwest Regional Director  
AVA: America's Walking Club  
210-325-3523

[sueammed@aol.com](mailto:sueammed@aol.com)

Patricia Heller (left) and Susan Medlin pose for a picture near the front entrance to the Faust Hotel after completing the 11k walk trail. Photo courtesy of Martin Callahan.

## **Nominating Committee Chair—Glen Conyers**

### **2017 Elections**

As we approach the 20<sup>th</sup> Biennial Billings Montana convention in June of 2017, we must remember that we are also approaching the election of officers for the upcoming new term. Positions open are President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

This is when you as an AVA member choose to run for a national office. Look at yourself and the services you have provided to your club, state and region. Are you ready to stand up and say “Elect me. I am qualified to serve you as a National Officer.” It is easy to sit back and criticize. This may be the time you step forward and make a difference.

Your Nominating Committee is a group of interested AVA members who volunteer their time to serve on this committee. Their purpose is to assist the candidates seeking office to understand the time lines and procedures to seek an office.

**Nomination Letters of Intent and Candidate Packages will be due in December in time for inclusion in the next TAW.**

**Election Guidelines for candidates to the NEC XX will be published in the December/January issue of TAW and the AVA website.**



## **Programs Committee—Debra Kruep, Chair**

### **AVA: America's Walking club is joining in with REI in their #OptOutside Campaign on Black Friday**

Won't you join us, and help people #OptOutside?

We are calling on all clubs to pick their favorite YRE and hold a group/guided walk on Black Friday. Even the smallest of clubs can pick a time and go for a walk! Send an email to [Hector@AVA.org](mailto:Hector@AVA.org) the following information for the AVA website and maybe some Social Media posts:

Date & Time:

Start Point: Location:

Point of Contact with email address:

Comment:

Name of Event, with City & State, so that we can include a link to the Event page, or a link to the AVA event page.

How you can help spread the word, include #OptOutside [#stayhealthywithAVA](#) [#walkwithAVA](#) on your Facebook posts about past AVA walks, and on upcoming AVA walks that you will be going to. Post more frequently about your walking adventures. There are people who have done IVV/AVA walks in the past that don't realize that they can do them here in the USA.

Let's all work together, to help spread the word, between now and Thanksgiving!

## **KEEPING OUR EYES ON THE PRIZE**

When I talk about the “prize”, I want us to keep our eyes on our purpose. Most all of us understand the AVA tagline – Fun, Fitness, Friendship. But, that’s not the complete story. There’s a deeper purpose – to “promote the public health, physical fitness and well-being of Americans.” As each of us in our clubs works to put on events, and gain more members to put on those events, we need to be thinking of this purpose. Fulfilling that purpose isn’t done with an occasional traditional event. It’s done by providing events all the time, so people can participate frequently. Otherwise we can become inconsequential – an occasional activity that’s fun to do, something for the old guard who remembers the “good old days”.

In fund development we are involved in helping foundations and other funders understand that purpose. We are developing a case statement that says what we do promotes a healthy lifestyle. We need to show that to be the case. We all know walking is healthy. Show us. How have you succeeded in losing weight, recovering from a knee or hip operation, lowering your blood pressure, etc.? Who do you know in your clubs, in your region whose participation in volkssporting has benefited? Who is actively walking in their eighties? Who does 100 walks every winter? We need your stories to develop our case. We are serious. Send your story or that of someone you know to our Executive Director at [henry@ava.org](mailto:henry@ava.org).

***AVA National Office Team***

### ***Awards and Membership Coordinator—Karen Winkle***

To view the Monthly Comparison Chart for the Total Number of Awards processed [click here](#).

### ***Events Coordinator—Marie Bebley***

**ALERT!**

- The Annual Financial Report and e-postcard filing confirmation deadline is November 15, 2016. Please submit these reports to [events@ava.org](mailto:events@ava.org).
- The update Officer information online deadline is November 15, 2016.
- The 3rd Quarterly Reports are due October 31, 2016. All reports submitted after this date are past due and subject to late fees.
- Event stamps for Seasonal walks that have ended and were not renewed for 2017 must be returned to the National Office.

## **Business Not as Usual—New Business Card Template**

It has come to our attention that some clubs don't have business cards. I have created a template and placed it on our [website](#). It will be under the Administrative tab. Once you hover over the tab you move down to the General Admin and then over to [AVA Graphics/logos](#). After you click on AVA Graphics/logos you will scroll down until you see the business card download link. Once you have downloaded it, open it and insert all your information on the first page. If your club has a logo you click on the AVA logo until you see a box around it letting you know you have chosen it. Then right click on the image and choose the option change picture and put in your club's logo.

## **Starting Point Books**

Now that all preorders for the Starting Point Book have been submitted we are ready to start taking orders. This is a first-come first-serve basis. To place an order please contact Theresa at (210) 659-2112.

## **Walks to Remember**

Every club has a famous walk. What's your club's famous walk coming up for the month of December? Email your walks information to [hector@ava.org](mailto:hector@ava.org) so we can help you market your walk.

## **Starting Point Changes**

Please remember to make all changes within your ESR and then send to Marie, I update the website weekly. Email changes to [marie@ava.org](mailto:marie@ava.org).

*Click here for this months [Starting Point Changes](#)*

## **Communications—Samanta Sanchez**

### **Shop Online and Support AVA**

With the Holidays right around the corner make sure you get the best deals by shopping with Goodshop and AmazonSmile. When you're shopping with Goodshop or AmazonSmile, you're not only saving money for yourself, but you are also raising crucial funds for the American Volkssport Association.



Sign up for Goodshop by going to [https://www.goodsearch.com/login?return\\_path=%2Finvite-friends](https://www.goodsearch.com/login?return_path=%2Finvite-friends). Your user profile will help keep track of the amount



you've raised. Select **American Volkssport Association—AVA** from the participating organizations and begin shopping. At no cost to you, a portion of all eligible purchases will go to your chosen cause. 100% of the donation amount displayed on merchant's Goodshop page will go to the charity or school of your choice. (*We hope it is AVA!*)



Shop at <https://smile.amazon.com/> and 0.5% of your eligible amazonsmile purchase will be donated to AVA directly from Amazon! Simply sign in or create an account, select **American Volkssport Association, Inc.—Universal City** as your charity of choice and begin shopping. It's that simple!

## Convention News

A second block of rooms for the 2017 AVA Convention was reserved with the Radisson Hotel Billings. We have blocked room nights for June 6-9 at a discounted group rate of \$89.95++ per night. For those arriving early or departing late, the discounted rate will be honored three days prior and three days post-convention. *There are still a couple of rooms left. Don't miss out!*

To make your reservations: please dial **1-800-333-3333** or **406-248-7701**. Make sure to mention the group block code **0606AVASSO** to get your discounted rate. Rooms will be booked on first-come, first-served bases so please plan accordingly. Stay tuned for hotel updates on [Facebook](#) and the [Convention Website](#).

Radisson Hotel Billings

5500 Midland Road

Billings, MT 59101



## AVA's Executive Director's Update—Henry Rosales

### 2017 Convention Update-Club Exhibit Tables, Paid Sponsorships & Silent Auction

If your club would like to host an exhibit table or send literature to be displayed at the convention this June in Billings, Montana please contact Sherry Sayers at [ChairPerson@2017AVAConvention.org](mailto:ChairPerson@2017AVAConvention.org). The tables are free for all State Associations and Clubs on a first-come first-serve basis.

Help us lower convention costs by supporting our efforts to identify individuals, organizations or companies who might be interested in purchasing a table or sponsorship for the convention. If you know of anyone feel free to send them the attached sponsorship form and contact Henry Rosales at [henry@ava.org](mailto:henry@ava.org) so that he can follow up. [Sponsorship form](#).

We are also requesting auction items for the silent auction. If you have something you would like to donate or need more information please contact Sherry Sayers at [ChairPerson@2017AVAConvention.org](mailto:ChairPerson@2017AVAConvention.org)

## AVA Insurance Policy

Many questions have been raised about our insurance with regards to what it will and will not cover. I have asked our broker to compile some basic information on our policy which I will publish in the December issue of the Checkpoint. What I can clarify is that we have two types of coverage, General Liability and Excess Accident Medical. The General Liability includes the Additional Insured coverage and claims made against the AVA to include the NEC and Club Officers. (This is why it is important to keep the Club Officers listing up to date.) The Excess Accident Medical is a separate policy for all participants who have signed a waiver. This coverage pays up to \$9,900, after the \$100.00 deductible, for medical expenses not covered by the participant's insurance after all other medical insurance coverages have been exhausted.

Special thanks to Dolores Grenier and the U.S. Freedom Walk Club for hosting the IML event in Washington, D.C. and Congratulations to Cynthia Turbin and the Shasta Sundial Strollers Club on their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in Redding, California. Thank you for the invitation, hospitality, and opportunity to experience two of our Signature events!



Shasta Sundial Strollers celebrating their 10th anniversary in Redding CA, Walking in the Mountains of Whiskeytown.



Samanta hitting the path at the IML in Washington, D.C..

*Support Our National and International Friends!*

**National**

***Great opportunity for clubs to get involved.***



**Call for Presentations**

Deadline December 9, 2016

[Visit Webpage](#)

[View/Download PDF](#)



Click image for more information.

[Click here the call for proposals.](#)



**\*\*Click on image to enlarge\*\***

Photo by Ray Harper 2015 Mobile, Alabama

## International



Click image for more information.

**Click on image for invite**

[Register here.](#)

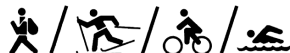
### Checkpoint Available Via Email to All Club Members Who Request It

To receive an electronic copy of the Checkpoint send us an email to the attention of Samanta requesting that you be put on our distribution list for the Checkpoint. Please note on the subject line: Request for Checkpoint.

Send your request to Samanta at [samanta@ava.org](mailto:samanta@ava.org).



**Fun, Fitness, Friendship**



**The American Volkssport Association**

**The Mission of AVA is to promote and organize noncompetitive physical fitness activities that encourage lifelong fun, fitness, and friendship for all ages and abilities.**

